

Hearing the Call

Overcoming Obstacles in the Hearing and Doing of the Will of God

Hindrances to Hearing the Missionary Call

There are several things that hinder men and women from hearing the missionary call. Many people, young and old alike, do not consider themselves available for a mission career because:

1. Because modern liberal theology has put a question mark on the purpose for missions.

The entire missionary movement is based on four presuppositions. If you do away with any of these in terms of your theology, you lose your purpose for missionary activity (Romans 10:9-15; II Cor. 5:11).

- That man is lost and needs to be saved.
- That salvation is found only in Jesus Christ.
- That in order to be saved it is necessary to hear and to believe the Gospel.
- That in order for people to hear they must have someone preach to them.

2. Because they fear what may be involved in a life of unconditional surrender to the Lord.

Some people became Christians with no understanding of the cross principle. They did not give their life. Now they are fearful of such a commitment. They have the sneaking suspicion that if they make a total surrender to Jesus Christ they will never be truly happy again. They assume that He will make them do the very thing that they have always vowed they would never do ("the thing that I feared the most", Job 3:35).

It is true that Jesus spoke of self-denial, but only as a road to self-fulfillment (Matt. 10:39).

Matt 10:37-39

37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

The most miserable person on the face of the earth is not the sinner enjoying the pleasures of sin, but the child of God who is trying desperately to serve two masters. There is nothing in the world more frustrating. For the Christian there is only one real way to self-fulfillment and that is the way of self-denial (Matt. 11:29-30; Prov. 3:17).

Matt 11:29-30

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Prov 3:17-18

*17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.
18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her,*

And happy are all who retain her.

3. Because they fear the world of political turmoil.

With governments changing hands every other day, bomb scares in every major city, killings, war, famine and all of the related crises, many are taking a second look at missions. There are some who are saying that the age of missions is past. Again, some are more concerned about saving their lives than doing the will of God.

4. Because they don't want to lose their personal freedom.

People today do not want anyone telling them what to do. This disposition begins at an early age. The four-year old boy who goes with his mom to the grocery store is allowed to choose from 75 types of cereal or 57 varieties of cookies. When he gets home he may change his mind and refuse to eat them, in which case he will be given a second choice the following week. In this way he never learns to accept discipline, to knuckle down to authority, to take "no" for an answer. After twenty five years of this kind of treatment young people can be forgiven if they have some serious misgivings about the mission field (Kane, pg. 54).

5. Because of the inadequate financial remuneration.

It is common knowledge that missionaries are among the lowest paid people in the world. Such a prospect is frightening to American youth who have been brought up in the lap of luxury and have been able to acquire anything their hearts desired.

Let's face it. People going to the mission field today probably have more to give up than in any other generation. When Hudson Taylor arrived in China, he didn't find any indoor plumbing, central heating, electric lights or telephone service. But so what? He didn't have them in England at that time either. Where was the sacrifice? In this sense the economic gap is widening all of the time between the have and the have not nations.

People are more concerned these days about having things. We must take our example from Christ (II Cor. 8:9).

2 Cor 8:8-9

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

6. Because missions is not generally considered a vocational option.

More and more these days, young people are being directed toward a life occupation by guidance counselors. In many cases church related work is never discussed as an option.

7. Because, as far as the world measures success, you will never be one.

The American formula for success includes wealth, social status and security. No one wants his daughter to marry a failure (i.e. a missionary). You have to decide if you want to be a hero on earth or a hero in heaven. You have to decide if you want your inheritance now or later.

8. Because they have a fear of failure.

With so much being said about the hardships of missionary life and the high qualifications for missionary service many have counted themselves out. They may say, "I just don't have what it takes."

First of all, remember that the human body is a tremendous organism that can adapt to nearly any environment over a period of time. Part of the problem is simply have the desire to adjust (You can learn to like the food!)

Secondly, God's grace is sufficient, even which you are not (II Cor. 12:9). The missionary does not go in his or her own strength. He is sent by the living Lord (Jn. 20:21), who have promised to be with him to the end of the age (Matt. 28:20). He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5).

If the missionary is a missionary by the will of God, he does not need to fear failure. God will lead him in and bring him to victory.

Hindrances to Realizing a Call that is Heard

There are several things that hinder men and women from realizing the call of God on their lives. There are many pitfalls between the decision to answer the call and the destination or the fulfillment of that call.

"It has been estimated that for every 100 persons who dedicate their life to missions, only one actually makes it to the field." (Kane, pg 64)

1. Some tire of waiting and preparing.

They feel that they should have been out sooner and they eventually let the fire go out.

2. Some get discouraged at the study required to qualify.

3. Some have accumulated too many debts.

By the time they are ready to go they cannot go. They have to spend all of their energy getting out of debt. To do this they must give themselves to getting the best paying job that they can get with little regard for their call.

4. Some get caught up in the pleasures of the world (Demas, II Tim. 4:10).

5. Some are drawn away in love and marriage.

It is possible to marry the wrong person when it comes to a missionary call. It is possible to marry someone who does not have the same vision, whose tastes and lifestyle demands will never find missionary life acceptable.

6. Some give way to parental opposition.

Parents only want what is best for their children and future grandchildren. Often they do not consider the life of a missionary the best possible choice. There comes a time when we must make a choice between the commands of Christ and the desires of our well-meaning parents (See: Matt. 10:37; Mark 10:29-30).

Matt 10:36-39

37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Mark 10:29-31

29 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time — houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions — and in the age to come, eternal life.

7. Some are drawn away by attractive offers at home.

If you are someone who has the character of Jesus Christ and a good work ethic you will be in demand in many sectors of society. It is easy to accept such flattery and choose to send your money and prayers instead of yourself. If God has called you to a work, neither your prayers nor your money will serve as an acceptable substitute.

8. Some have a fear of failure.

Whom God calls he qualifies.

Altar Call: "I'll say yes, yes, yes"

I know that we are talking specifically about missions this weekend, but I want to broaden it now. We all have a call. We all have a destiny. We all must put aside the distractions and say "YES" to the Lord. We must all deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow the Lord. What is God saying to you? What were you born to do? Will you say yes to the Lord? Are you ready for a life of significance?